

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 IO-10 ISO-00 FEA-01 AGR-05 CEA-01

CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 FRB-03 H-02 INR-07 INT-05

L-03 LAB-04 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 AID-05 CIEP-01 SS-15

STR-04 TAR-01 TRSE-00 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 OMB-01

XMB-02 OPIC-03 /102 W

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R 161808Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7926

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

USDEL MTN GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L COTONOU 1925

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: EINV, DM

SUBJ: EXPROPRIATED US PROPERTY AND ELIGIBILITY FOR GSP

REF A. COTONOU 1907 B. STATE 289745 C. COTONOU 1848

1. AS EXPECTED, MIN OF INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE (ATCHADE) HAS NOT REPLIED TO AMB'S LETTER OF DEC 12, WHICH WAS "IN EX-TREMIS" REQUEST FOR INFO RE PROGRESS TOWARD INDEMNIFICATION OF TEXACO AND MOBIL FOR ASSETS SEIZED ONE YEAR AGO BY PRB. DIR OF NORTH AMERICA-WESTERN EUROPE DIVISION OF FORNMIN HAS EXPRESSED REGRET RE HIS MINISTRY'S INABILITY STIMULATE RESPONSES FROM MINISTRIES OF FINANCE AND INDUSTRY/COMMERCE.

2. HAVING WAITED SEVERAL WEEKS FOR APPOINTMENT WITH DIRGEN OF SOCIETE DAHOMEENNE DE BANQUE (SDB), BRUNO AMOUSSOU, WHO ACCORDING TO MIN OF FINANCE, IS KEY MEMBER OF COMMISSION (IF NOT CHAIRMAN) DEALING WITH INDEMNIFICATION OF NATIONALIZED BANKS, DCM WAS GIVEN APPOINTMENT TODAY WITH THAT OFFICIAL'S DEPUTY ABDOULAYE MALLAM-IDI. LATTER SAID HE WAS NOT ON COMM-
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SSION HIMSELF BUT HE CLAIMED TO BE WELL BRIEFED ON ITS WORK.

HE SAID COMMISSION WOULD COMPLETE ITS ANALYSIS OF VALUE OF BIAO AND BICID NATIONALIZED PROPERTY SOMETIME IN NEXT ONE TO THREE MONTHS. BICID HAS NOT YET SUBMITTED A CLAIM (PERHAPS IT HAS NOT BEEN ASKED TO). BIAO, HOWEVER, HAD SUBMITTED ITS CLAIM AND GOVT WOULD MAKE COUNTER-PROPOSAL AS SOON AS COMMISSION'S ANALYSIS WAS COMPLETED. MALLAM-IDI EXPRESSED OPTIMISM THAT ONCE THAT ANALYSIS WAS READY, A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT WITH BIAO WOULD BE ARRANGED IN SHORT ORDER.

3. COMMENT: WE WILL ENDEAVOR CHECK OUT IN OTHER QUARTERS MALLAM-IDI'S ACCOUNT, WHICH LOOKS TO US LIKE AN EMIMTY COVER STORY (E.G., IT CONTAINS NO SPECIFICS RE COMMISSION'S WORK TO DATE). MALAM-IDI, A REVOLUTIONARY, ADMITTED THAT HE HAD BEEN OUT OF THE COUNTRY FOR PAST TWO MONTHS. SUBMISSION OF BIAO CLAIM REFLECTS INDUSTRY ON THE PART OF THAT NATIONALIZED BANK, BUT NOT ANY PROGRESS IN WORK OF COMMISSION. WE UNDERSTAND THAT BRUNO AMOUSSOU HAS BEEN IN JAIL FOR PAST FEW WEEKS. WE QUESTION WHETHER COMMISSION CAN GET MUCH WORK DONE WITHOUT HIM. END COMMENT.

4. RECOMMENDATION: THAT BENIN BE TEMPORARILY DROPPED FROM LIST OF COUNTRIES ELIGIBLE FOR GSP, AND THAT RESTORATION TO THE LIST, TO GET TRADE BENEFITS AND AVOID VULNERABILITY TO HICKENLOOPER AND GONZALES AMENDMENTS, BE USED AS AN INCENTIVE TO GET THE PRB CRACKING ON THE TEXACO AND MOBIL CLAIMS.
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